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University Relations, "University of Minnesota, Morris Receives \$1.2 Million Award from Howard Hughes Medical Institute" (2012).
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University of Minnesota, Morris Receives \$1.2 Million Award from Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Summary: The University of Minnesota, Morris is one of 47 small undergraduate colleges and universities in the United States to receive a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI).

(June 13, 2012)-Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) has awarded the University of Minnesota, Morris, a four-year, \$1.2 million grant to encourage success in science of students from all backgrounds.

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) selected 47 small undergraduate universities and colleges in the United States — from an initial pool of 215 invited schools — as the recipients of grants totaling more than \$50 million for its science education initiative. Morris's project was funded in HHMI's target area of "persistence of all students", which encourages success in science of students from all backgrounds.

"HHMI is investing in these schools because they have shown they are superb incubators of new ideas and models that might be replicated by other institutions to improve how science is taught in college," said Sean B. Carroll, vice president of science education at HHMI. "We know that these schools have engaged faculty. They care deeply about teaching and how effectively their students are learning about science."

The project was led by Morris biology faculty members in collaboration with faculty from throughout the Division of Science and Mathematics. Associate Professor of Biology Paul Z. Myers will serve as the project director.

"We are very proud that the University of Minnesota, Morris is among the five Minnesota schools that have received this prestigious award," says Bart D. Finzel, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean. "This collaborative effort is just one of many examples of the tremendous work that our faculty are doing in support of the research and educational pursuits of our students." Other Minnesota schools receiving HHMI awards are Carleton College, Hamline University, Macalester College, and St. Olaf College. And Morris Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson comments, "We were delighted to learn of this award. Morris serves a very diverse and talented group of undergraduate students. This award builds upon our mission and provides another opportunity for us to advance learning and student success in STEM fields."

To achieve the "persistence of all students" objective, the University will implement five strategic initiatives that encompass K-12 teacher assistance, mentoring, research, community outreach, and aid for career searches and further education opportunities.

- "Changes in Nature" is an in-service workshop for K-12 teachers that will provide, teach, and assist in development of curricula to address underrepresented issues in science classrooms.
- The "Bridge to College" is a program for first-year science students that teaches research principles and connects the new students with upper-level students and faculty.

- The “Undergraduate Summer Research Program,” will giving more students extended research opportunities during their undergraduate years, to better prepare them for careers in science and graduate work.

- “Café Scientifique” is a community outreach program in which the students will promote and discuss their work with community members. Outreach is an important portion of scientific study, and community ties will be strengthened by openly sharing research.

- To aid career searches and further education opportunities the “Careers in Science Seminar and Resource Room” will allow students to learn about diverse careers in science, network with other students, and discover other educational opportunities during their time at Morris, including summer Research Experiences for Undergraduates and internships.

The goal of these initiatives is to strengthen Morris’s preparation of undergraduates for careers in science, increase the number of graduates continuing their education into graduate programs and develop and improve on effective mentoring strategies.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.